

REMARKS

This is in response to the Office Action dated October 15, 2008. In view of the foregoing amendments and following representations, reconsideration is respectfully requested.

By the above amendment, claims 1-3, 5-10, 22 and 23 are amended; and claim 4 is cancelled. Thus, claims 1-3, 5-10, 22 and 23 are currently pending in the present application.

Next, the specification and abstract have been reviewed and revised in order to make a number of minor clarifying and other editorial amendments. Note that the changes to the abstract are submitted in the form of a substitute abstract. Copies of the amended portions of the specification, claims and abstract with changes marked therein are attached and entitled "Version with Markings to Show Changes Made."

Next, on pages 2-5 of the Office Action, claims 1, 2, 4-10, 22 and 23 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Easton (U.S. Patent No. 6,332,536). Also, on pages 5-6 of the Office Action, claim 3 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Easton in view of Gfeller et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,157,870). It is submitted that the present invention, as embodied by the amended claims, now clearly distinguishes over the applied prior art reference for the following reasons.

The present invention, as embodied by amended independent claim 1, requires, *inter alia*, "a position specification step of specifying a placement position in the component supplying unit where the component holder is placed, based on a difference in position coordinates of each of a plurality of IC tags including the IC tag, the position coordinates being obtained based on a state of a signal received from each of the plurality of IC tags, wherein each of the plurality of IC tags is attached to a corresponding one of a plurality of component holders including the component

holder.”

In the claimed arrangement, since the placement position of the component holder placed in a component supply unit is specified based on the difference in the position coordinates of the respective IC tags, and identification information is read from the IC tag having the position coordinates corresponding to the placement position of the component holder specified by such placement position, it is possible to verify whether or not the position of the component holder and the type of the component held in the component holder are correct by merely placing a component holder in the component supplying unit. As a result, since the reading is performed from the IC tag, there is absolutely no need for the operator to carry out operations such as scanning from the component holder, using a reader.

Easton discloses a component tape including a carrier tape and a cover tape having information printed thereon. The printed information is produced by direct marking or by imaging, and may include a variety of information such as the number of components. In Easton, component verification is performed by reading the printed information by scanning with a scanning device (see col. 11, line 60 to col. 14, line 8).

However, the Easton reference does not suggest anything regarding the idea of specifying the placement position of the component holder placed in a component supply unit, based on the difference in the position coordinates of respective IC tags. Easton also fails to disclose the unique aspect of the present invention, as specified in claim 1, which includes “a position specification step” (set forth above) and “a read step of reading the identification information from the IC tag attached to the component holder, the IC tag having position coordinates

corresponding to the placement position of the component holder specified in the position specification step.”

Therefore, it is clear that Easton does not disclose each and every feature of claim 1, and therefore cannot anticipate claim 1 under 35 U.S.C. 102(b). Furthermore, in contrast to the present invention, the Easton verification system cannot achieve the advantageous effect of being able to verify whether or not the position of the component holder and the type of the component held in the component holder are correct by merely placing a component holder in the component supplying unit.

Further, independent claim 22 has been amended to require, *inter alia*, “a position specification unit operable to specify a placement position in the component supplying unit where the component holder is placed, based on a difference in position coordinates of each of a plurality of IC tags including the IC tag, the position coordinates being obtained based on a state of a signal received from each of the plurality of IC tags, wherein each of the plurality of IC tags is attached to a corresponding one of a plurality of component holders including the component holder; and a read unit operable to read the identification information from the IC tag attached to the component holder, the IC tag having position coordinates corresponding to the placement position of the component holder specified by the position specification unit.”

Clearly, the Easton system lacks anything that is capable of specifying a placement position in a component supplying unit where the component holder is placed based on a difference in position coordinates of each of a plurality of IC tags. Accordingly, it is submitted that the claim 22 is clearly allowable over the Easton reference.

Further, in the obviousness rejection of claim 3, the **Gfeller** reference is applied by the Examiner to teach a splice sensor for detecting a splice between a first tape and a second tape. However, Gfeller does not disclose or suggest the features that are omitted in the Easton reference, and therefore any combination of these references would not result in Applicant's invention as set forth in independent claims 1 and 22. Note that the remaining claims depend, directly or indirectly, from one of the allowable independent claims, and are therefore allowable at least by virtue of their dependencies.

In view of the above, it is submitted that the present application is now clearly in condition for allowance. The Examiner therefore is requested to pass this case to issue.

In the event that the Examiner has any comments or suggestions of a nature necessary to place this case in condition for allowance, then the Examiner is requested to contact Applicant's undersigned attorney by telephone to promptly resolve any remaining matters.

Respectfully submitted,

Yasuhiro MAENISHI et al.

/Michael S. Huppert/

By: 2009.01.15 12:59:18 -05'00'

Michael S. Huppert

Registration No. 40,268

Attorney for Applicants

MSH/kjf

Washington, D.C. 20006-1021

Telephone (202) 721-8200

Facsimile (202) 721-8250

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